

**Subject: UN HEADQUARTERS PRESS CONFERENCE BY  
INTERNATIONAL ROMANI UNION****Date:** Sat, 9 Jun 2001 02:28:04 -0000**From:** "Mr. Ariel Eliyahu" <eli-ari@inter.net.il>**To:** "Roma ando Israel" <roma\_ando\_israel@hotmail.com><http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2001/ROMANIPC.doc.htm>

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**HEADQUARTERS PRESS CONFERENCE BY INTERNATIONAL ROMANI UNION**

At a historic meeting with Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, this morning, the International Romani Union had asked for a representation of the Roma Nation, which did not want to become a State, correspondents were told at a Headquarters press conference this afternoon.

Taking part in the press conference were the Union's President, Emil Scuka, and its Commissar for Foreign Policy, Paolo Pietrosanti.

Mr. Scuka further said that during this morning's meeting, which was a source of hope and pride to his people, he had presented to the Secretary-General the Declaration of the Roma Nation, which had also recently been forwarded to high Government officials of many countries, including Austria, Italy, Sweden, Czech Republic, India and Bulgaria. Also, a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation had recently been signed between the International Romani Union and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, which sponsored today's press conference.

During the discussion with the Secretary-General, the representatives of the Union had described the Roma Nation as a colourful and optimistic people living all around the world, its structure similar to the structure of the United Nations itself, Mr. Scuka said. The Secretary-General was well informed about their situation, in particular in Hungary, which he had visited last June. The Secretary-General had also mentioned the high level of discrimination and racism against the Roma people in many parts of the world. From the meeting, the representatives of the Union had got the feeling that Mr. Annan was prepared not only to hear the voice of the Roma people, but also to help them.

For over 20 years, the Union had had the status of a non-governmental organization at the United Nations, he continued, and the question was how a nation could be perceived as such and how an equal status with other nations could be achieved. He was sure that the situation would evolve in the future, for many questions could not be answered right now.

Mr. Pietrosanti added that on presenting the Declaration to the Secretary-General, the representatives of the International Romani Union had emphasized that it included an affirmation of the Roma as a nation that did not want to become a State, but was seeking representation at the United Nations and at the European level, since the huge majority of the Roma people lived in the so-called "Old World".

Citing Europe as an example, he said that the Roma were considered a minority there. However, had the dream and the political will of prominent European federalists, including Adenauer, come true, had Europe been differently organized, the Roma would not be a minority today. That was a matter of viewpoint. Having suffered discrimination and "a forgotten holocaust", the Roma Nation was not only asking for memory and respect -- it also had much to offer. Giving an answer to the Romani Union would also mean an answer to many questions before the international community today.

In conclusion, he thanked Mr. Annan for giving the Romani Union representatives an occasion to express their views.